



Top: Flynn Fuller of the USAID shakes hands to welcome new Fulbright grantees 2010 at the Ambassador's residence.

Down: New Fulbright grantee Hong Sethykun (left) and former Fulbright students and volunteer socialize at the Annual Gathering event.

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New recruits meet with their old

By Thon Sonina, FAAC Volunteer

Some one hundred alumni of US exchange programs were brought together to meet with newly selected Fulbright students at the US Ambassador's residence on Wednesday evening, September 22nd. This event was part of the annual gathering to recognize the important achievements of the new recruits for some of the most prestigious academic scholarships that the US government offers.



New grantees meet with alumni of US exchange programs at the Ambassador's residence

The US Embassy has increased its exchange programs, and in 2010 the Embassy sent over 40 students to the United States compared with only 17 in 2008. The Fulbright and Hubert Humphrey programs continue to be the core of the US educational offerings in Cambodia. Ambassador Carol A. Rodley said this latest generation of students, both in secondary school and in university, are some of the brightest and most dedicated young people that this country has seen.

"I think we can all agree that the future of Cambodia lies in the hands of this next generation, and that building human capacity should be a priority in the coming years," Ambassador Rodley said in her opening remarks. "We are happy that we can play a small role in this process."

Since the US Embassy reopened nineteen years ago, it has supported around 350 Cambodian students to pursue their studies in the United States. The alumni take what they have learned inside and outside the classroom in the US back to Cambodia and contribute to the country's development. The evening's event was for them to share their experiences with the new recruits.

Alumni in action

Fulbright returnees have initiated student development projects and continued to contribute to building human capital for the nation. Samphors Sar is one of the many returnees who bring back their experiences in the United States to share with Cambodian students. In September, as other alumni were conducting educational programs such as the lecture series, Samphors went to Preah Sihanouk province to share her experiences in winning one of the most prestigious scholarships to the United States. Ask Samphors a question on our facebook page: www.facebook.com/cambodianfulbrighters.



Sar Samphors and a group of youth from YCC after a Fulbright information sharing session in Preah Sihanouk province.



Photos from the Annual Gathering event hosted by Ambassador Rodley on September 22, 2010

To showcase our alumni's contributions to the society, we create this space to feature one of our alumni. In this edition, we feature Mr. Sim Sorya, Analysis Unit Leader at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia.

Please tell us about your work and educational background

I work as the Analysis Unit leader at the Office of the Co-Investigating Judges, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). In 1994 I got a BEd (TEFL) from IFL, RUPP, and in 1997 I got an MA in International Relations from Yale University.

What was your biggest challenge when applying for the Fulbright scholarship?

Not a big challenge. Then, it was more about to tell you were better than a few good, rather than you were the best of the best today. The fortunate part was that I had work and study background that supported what I wanted to study.

A big challenge was, instead, keeping up with the standard and quality of Yale University, for a young man from post conflict Cambodia where books and internet were not so available as today.

What did you gain from studying in America as a Fulbright scholar?

Yale! Fulbright! Really keep me on the ball, not sidetracking from a standard. These things institutionalize the ways my mother raise me, i.e. free and open-minded. She allowed me to do things I liked, to play, to study or to work. When applying for the Fulbright, I chose my field of study, When I was at Yale I chose my courses. When people make me feel free, I personally think people love me and trust me, and as much I want to return with pride while exploring my own world. My mother is now over 90. With many children and neighbors, she never believes in singular hearsay, and I call it open-minded. Wherever you are, think positively or creatively and look from outside the box.

What do you like the most about your current job?

My job is about justice. Justice anywhere requires substantiated fact or evidence. My previous job was about writing an article or a book, skilled in what constitutes a fact, scientifically. Now I go with the same idea plus a

certain procedure to qualify for a judicial international investigation. I view this as a step forward in my career. And I was recently promoted. That surely rewards my theory. I do more, even things people might deem less important. I keep learning new things. These days you lead by example. You give a chance for people to think and do things they like. And you simply give examples in a way they choose to appreciate.

How does your major in US graduate school contribute to your daily work?

Graduate courses offered were broad and accommodated the need of individuals. So, I took courses such as the Cold War and Vietnam War, and directed research on the Khmer Rouge, in addition to my concentration. The courses exposed me to the Khmer Rouge in a broad sense. Again experiences from inside and outside of American classroom do contribute to my work in many ways: creative thinking, critical reading and writing, research skill, citation, writing a story with a balanced source.

But do remember your school days are only the beginning, not the end. Choose what you like, but not be too rigid about it. Your liking can change, the world is changing, employer does not necessarily look at your beginning. They look at how you can progress.

After coming from America, what have you brought back to contribute to the country development?

If Imperial Encounters is correct, Cambodia is no exception.* History or other mediums of wisdom is written more for Cambodia and less by Cambodia. I see the need for more Cambodians to read and write at least history. This is pretty much the early part of my career, when I supervised research and writing.

* [Roxanne Lynn Doty, University of Minnesota Press, 1996]

Would your life be any different if you hadn't applied for this scholarship?

Changing world comes with new opportunities, and more scholarships come with more applicants, however, I believe "character is destiny" one way or another.



Sim Sorya, Fulbright Scholar 1995-1997, receives Certificate of Appreciation from Ambassador Rodley

EDUCATION

Yale University, M.A., International Relations, concentration: Political Economy of Trade and Development, 1995-1997

Royal University of Phnom Penh, B.Ed., Teaching English as a Foreign Language, 1990-1994

WORK

Leader, Analysis Unit, Office of the Co-Investigating Judges, ECCC, 2010: Khmer Rouge tribunal backed by the UN

Investigator, Office of the Co-Investigating Judges, ECCC, 2006-2009: Khmer Rouge tribunal backed by the UN

Deputy Director/Research, Documentation Center of Cambodia, 1997-2006: Khmer Rouge history

Research Affiliate, Yale University, 1997: Khmer Rouge history

Translator, American Bar Association, 1994-1995: Commercial laws, commercial arbitration law

Translator/Assistant, International Republican Institute, 1993-1994: Civic education, political Party, election, democracy

Translator/Assistant, United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, 1992-1993: Human rights/criminal Laws/democracy



Photos: Educational project activities of representatives of the US Embassy and the FAAC from July - September 2010

Meeting MDGs: Can the world get back on track?

By Soleak Seang

Obama's speech at the UN Summit in September was quite impressive, giving people hope that it's still possible for countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In 2000, 189 countries signed up to the MDGs, committing to halve poverty by 2015. This year marks two-thirds of the way to this deadline, but progress has been slow, and today the MDGs are dangerously off track. One-third of the planet or 2 billion people are still trapped in poverty. The clock is ticking, and world leaders have only five years to meet the goals. They must deliver a five-year strategy that will accelerate the pace of progress on the MDGs and provide the foundation of long-term development and economic prosperity.

Meeting the MDGs must be a global effort. There are still hosts of challenges ranging from food insecurity and global climate change to unfair trade that countries need to collectively address. The United States has to share the responsibility, and I'm glad that the Obama administration in 2009 and 2010, reaffirmed that "the MDGs are America's goals."

There has been real progress, but countries need to speed up their efforts because some of the MDG targets are likely to be missed. The world can't afford a single broken MDG promise because the eight goals they set in 2000 are inter-related. If a family struggles to get two meals a day, it is difficult

for them to send their children to school. And if they don't have access to school, it is difficult to get health outcomes because they miss opportunities to get basic education about health.

We've seen developed countries dragging their feet in providing official development aid (ODA). Many have used the global economic crisis as an excuse for retrenching their ODA. The United States provides only 0.19 percent of its gross national income as ODA. The contribution of the United States pales in comparison to many European countries and is far from reaching the goal of a 0.7 percent contribution. Obama is giving us hope, but it shouldn't be just talking. The time to act is now. The United States must show its leadership in rescuing the DMGs.

The lives of the next generation are in the hand of those world leaders. They can put the world back on track to a better future, and halving hunger is still possible if we work together. Developing countries take the lead with the right policies and investments, donor countries increase dramatically their aid to agriculture, food security and social protection under nationally and regionally-driven plans, and the global issues affecting food security are collectively addressed.

Young people get their voices heard at the 11th International Youth Day

By In Phearun, FAAC Volunteer



Participants at the 11th International Youth Day at PUC

Hundreds of young Cambodians came together on August 12th to commemorate the 11th International Youth Day at Pannasastra University of Cambodia.

Youth participation can contribute significantly to the progress of our society, PUC Rector Chea Sanchantorn said at the opening of the event.

Recognizing the potential of youth in the development of society, the United Nations decided that the International Youth Day be celebrated on August 12th. This is not the only day that youths around the world can voice their thoughts and concerns, but it's the day to remind and further encourage them to utilize their potentials to contribute to the development of their community and society. It is the day that they can collectively send strong messages to attract attention of world leaders to their concerns and the challenges they are facing.

This year some 700 young Cambodians joined millions of youths around the world in organizing the anniversary under the theme **Dialogue and Mutual Understanding**. The event

was organized by the Youth Department with collaboration with various youth organizations, academics and civil society groups.

Rector Sanchantorn took the opportunity to share his experiences in organizing one youth club and encouraged youths to initiate similar ideas and organize one. The participants were inspired upon hearing encouraging comments and suggestions. They then enjoyed watching videos about youth representatives visiting national institutions, private sector, donors and embassies, showing an example of energetic youth campaign activities in order to make their voices heard. It is then followed by an active discussion and exchange regarding the results of the youth campaign, making the event a very special moment for youths to mutually exchange experiences, including their challenges and opportunities ahead.

They found a number of issues which need urgent actions, and they recognized that the International Youth Day provides a platform for youth to openly discuss challenges and to work out ways to take full benefits of future opportunities. It was another step forward that youths can utilize their rights to make their voices heard and to tell the world about their power and potential to foster societal changes. I want to join such motivating event the years to years to come. What are you waiting for?



Alumni of US exchange programs and Ambassador Carol Rodley at the Annual Gathering on September 22nd, 2010



Representatives from the United States Embassy and Fulbright Alumni Association of Cambodia give presentations on US Exchange Programs, how to write a study objective, and sharing of experience from the United States at the UME Pursat and Angkor Khemara Pursat on September 04-05, 2010.

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